

DAVID Y. IGE  
Governor

JOSH GREEN  
Lt. Governor



PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER  
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

MORRIS M. ATTA  
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawaii  
**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
1428 South King Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-2512  
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

TESTIMONY OF PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER  
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

MARCH 13, 2020  
8:30 A.M.  
CONFERENCE ROOM 312

SENATE BILL NO. 3038, SENATE DRAFT 2

Chairperson Creagan and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 3038, SD 2. This measure seeks to provide economic incentive for new taro farmers, improve the livelihoods of existing taro farmers, and reduce the cost of poi for local families by excluding from State income taxes, the first \$100,000 of gross income derived from sale of taro products, land used for taro farming or any activity directly related to taro farming. This exclusion no longer applies once the Department of Land and Natural Resources determines the total amount of land for taro growing surpasses 30,000 acres.

The Department supports the intent of this measure, defers to the Department of Taxation with respect to the proposed amendments to Chapter 235, and offers comments.

According to the National Agricultural Statistics Service – Hawaii Field Office, 2018 harvested wet and dryland taro acreage was 310 acres, down from 350 acres in 2017 because of crop damage from flooding rains.

All farmers in Hawaii are saddled with the high cost of farming inputs, including land, water, labor, and energy. Both the Administration and the Legislature have expressed strong support to increase local food self-sufficiency. We believe this effort to increase income to taro farmers would align better with the priority to increase food self-sufficiency by extending the proposed exclusion from income tax to all agricultural producers and the agricultural products they produce across the State.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.





DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR

JOSH GREEN M.D.  
LT. GOVERNOR



STATE OF HAWAII  
**DEPARTMENT OF TAXATION**  
P.O. BOX 259  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809  
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RONA M. SUZUKI  
DIRECTOR OF TAXATION

DAMIEN A. ELEFANTE  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

To: The Honorable Richard P. Creagan, Chair;  
The Honorable Lynn DeCoite, Vice Chair;  
and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture

From: Rona M. Suzuki, Director  
Department of Taxation

Re: **S.B. 3038, S.D. 2, Relating to Agriculture**

Date: Friday, March 13, 2020

Time: 8:30 A.M.

Place: Conference Room 312, State Capitol

The Department of Taxation (Department) **opposes the structure of the tax exclusion provisions** in S.B. 3038, S.D. 2.

S.B. 3038, S.D. 2, amends section 235-7(a), Hawaii Revised Statutes, which governs exclusions from gross income, adjusted gross income, and taxable income in Hawaii's income tax. The measure proposes to exempt any income up to \$100,000 derived from the direct sale of taro products, lands used for taro farming, or any activity directly related to taro farming, but disallows the exclusion to taxpayers "if at any time during the year the total amount of land for locally grown taro in the State surpasses thirty thousand acres" as determined by the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR). The measure has a defective effective date of July 1, 2050 and otherwise applies to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2019.

The Department notes that the S.D.2 includes extensive changes to the previous version of this bill, which originally followed the Department's recommendation to establish a new standalone HRS section instead of amending an existing statute. The Department **recommends reverting to the bill structure in S.D. 1 of this measure and creating a new statutory section for this exclusion instead of amending section 235-7(a), HRS.** This will allow for more clarity and specificity to define things like "taro farming" and "taro products" and to better identify which taxpayers and what income should be properly excluded. As currently written, **the ambiguity in the statute and the Department's lack of subject-matter expertise in taro farming could lead to taxpayer confusion, administrative difficulties, and unintended losses in revenue.**

The Department defers to DLNR on its ability to determine when the total amount of land for locally grown taro surpasses the 30,000-acre threshold.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.



**SB3038 SD2**  
**RELATING TO TARO**  
House Committee on Agriculture

March 13, 2020

8:30 a.m.

Room 312

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** SB3038 SD2, which would create economic incentives for taro farmers and potentially reduce the cost of poi for local families by exempting taro production from state income taxes.

In 2008, the Hawai'i State Legislature passed Act 211 which established the Taro Security and Purity Task Force. Act 211 directed taro farmers, agencies and University of Hawai'i representatives to seek solutions to challenges facing taro, taro farmers and taro markets. Funding and administrative support from the Office of Hawaiian Affairs enabled the Task Force to meet consistently and to gather input from taro growing communities on all islands over a period of 12 months.

The ensuing 2010 Legislative Report entitled, "E Ola Hou Ke Kalo; Ho'i Hou Ka 'Āina Lē'ia – The Taro Lives; Abundance Returns to the Land," issued 87 recommendations and grouped them according to the following categories: Land; Water; Economic Viability; Biosecurity; Research; Communication, Education, and Public Awareness; and Hawaiian Taro Varieties. Among them were recommendations to implement tax relief measures to ease the cost burden to existing and future taro farmers.

This measure creates the kind of tax relief that facilitates a taro farmer's ability to overcome economic barriers that would otherwise prohibit them from succeeding. By exempting taro farmers, farms and poi mills from state income taxes up to \$100,000, this bill would create resources to invest back into taro farming and serve as incentive for youth to engage in the cultivation and production of taro.

Accordingly, OHA urges the Committee to **PASS** SB3038 SD2. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
THE COUNTY OF KAUA'I

DEREK S. K. KAWAKAMI, MAYOR  
MICHAEL A. DAHLIG, MANAGING DIRECTOR

Testimony of Nalani Brun  
Acting Director, Office of Economic Development

Before the  
House Committee on Agriculture  
March 13, 2020; 8:30 pm  
Conference Room 312

In consideration of  
Senate Bill 3038 SD2 Relating to Taro

Honorable Chair Creagan, Vice Chair DeCoite, and Members of the Committee

The County of Kauai **supports** SB 3038 SD2 which exempts taro production from the state income tax. Kauai has more taro in cultivation than the rest of the state combined, but sadly, this totals only 443 acres. Kauai's 2018 General Plan includes several objectives that relate to the preservation of taro production:

- P 91 Under the goal of retaining and restoring the historic character of Hanalei, the plan calls for the County to "...protect the kalo lo'i of Hanalei in perpetuity."
- P 166 Under the objective of ensuring the long-term viability and productivity of agricultural lands, the plan calls for "*Perpetuating Kaua'i's Long Tradition of Agriculture*" and further describes this tradition as follows: "*In i ka wā kahiko (meaning "in old times/long ago/in the age of antiquity"), a variety of lo'i terraces, dry-land agriculture, fish ponds, and salt pans supported a large population. Some of Kaua'i's modern agricultural infrastructure is inherited from the ancient Hawaiians, such as taro fields and ditch systems. Traditional agricultural products such as taro, coconut, and breadfruit are still in demand and are synonymous with both healthy living and regional identity.*"

The Kauai General Plan further describes the pressures that development exerts on taro production on the North Shore:

- P 167 *Taro production is concentrated in and around Hanalei. The North Shore's land ownership patterns are more fragmented and among the most desirable areas for high-end housing. This, coupled with regulations that permit agricultural condominiums, exerts development pressure on the North Shore's agricultural lands.*



The General Plan discusses the importance of perpetuating cultural practices such as taro production:

P 178            Under the objective of recognizing and protecting the resources and places important to Kaua'i's history and people, the plan calls for *"Perpetuating Cultural Practices through Restoration, Stewardship, and Education"* and further states *"Important lo'i kalo, dry land field systems, and fishponds are examples of Hawaiian engineering tailored to particular ecological conditions. Protecting and restoring them is vital to the restoration of culture, Hawaiian way of life, flourishing ecosystems, and local food production. For example, the community-stewarded lo'i of Waipā and Kē'ē connect residents to the places where many no longer can afford to reside."*

If we wish to preserve the tradition of taro farming in Hawaii, we must plainly recognize that it has been disappearing for decades under the current system, and that special treatment such as this measure's proposed income tax relief may be both necessary and appropriate to restore and perpetuate it.

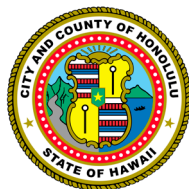
Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

OFFICE OF CLIMATE CHANGE, SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCY

**CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

925 DILLINGHAM BOULEVARD, SUITE 257 • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96817  
PHONE: (808) 768-2277 • EMAIL: [resilientoahu@honolulu.gov](mailto:resilientoahu@honolulu.gov) • INTERNET: [www.resilientoahu.org](http://www.resilientoahu.org)

KIRK CALDWELL  
MAYOR



JOSHUA W. STANBRO  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR &  
CHIEF RESILIENCE OFFICER

FRIDAY, MARCH 13, 2020, 8:30 AM

STATE OF HAWAII  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

**TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 3038, SD2  
A BILL RELATING TO TARO**

BY,

JOSHUA STANBRO  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CHIEF RESILIENCE OFFICER  
OFFICE OF CLIMATE CHANGE, SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCY

Dear Chair Creagan and Members of the Committee:

The City and County of Honolulu Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency (“Resilience Office”) **supports the intent and offers comments** on Senate Bill 3038, SD2, which seeks to exclude up to \$100,000 of income derived from taro production from the state income tax.

Taro offers important resilience and sustainability advantages to our island community, particularly in the face of climate change impacts. The Resilience Office offers comments on including language regarding the biosecurity protection of taro to SB3038 to prevent the ever-increasing risks of new diseases, pests, and invasive taro cultivars from importing certain raw taro products.

The Committee on Agriculture and Environment Standing Committee Report No. 2625 found “that it is of critical importance to protect and perpetuate the traditional practice of taro farming as part of Hawai‘i’s cultural identity and its role in local food security. Lo‘i kalo, or wetland taro systems, are recognized for their potential to mitigate impacts of climate change by functioning as riparian buffers and soil capture basins. Also, underground foods, such as taro, can often survive hurricane or flood events and be harvested to address immediate food shortages where the capacity to store and cook food can be retained.”

The Resilience Office strongly supports protecting Hawai‘i’s most culturally important food crop by banning the importation of taro corms unless dried, cooked,

frozen, or peeled and banning the importation of live taro plant material from any point of origin in the United States. The addition of biosecurity protections in the bill would:

- Promote indigenous solutions to climate change by recognizing the mitigation potential lo'i kalo provides.
- Increase climate resilience around the Islands by preserving and expanding the ecosystem services that result from locally grown taro.
- Provide biosecurity for local growers by reducing exposure to a wide variety of invasive pests and diseases.
- Preserve and expand critical riparian wildlife habitat that overlaps significantly with areas where taro is cultivated.
- Improve food security for Hawai'i's remote population by preserving and expanding production of locally grown taro.
- Support further taro biosecurity regulation at the federal level by demonstrating that the State is taking action where we have the authority.
- Benefit the local economy by reducing our reliance on imports and keeping money circulating in the local economy.

Proposed language to address the above concerns as follows:

~150A- Taro; importation restrictions. (a) Raw taro corms and any portion of a live taro plant with corm, buds, or root present shall be designated as propagatable material.

(b) The importation of live taro corms or plant material for any purpose, including research, breeding, and ornamental use and sale, from any point of origin in the United States into Hawaii is prohibited.

(c) The importation of taro corms from any point of origin in the United States shall be allowed when dried, cooked, frozen for a minimum of eight days, or peeled.

(d) Live plant material from Hawaiian taro varieties shall be allowed from any point of origin in the United States if:

(1) There is a verifiable historical record of distribution from Hawaii to that point of origin;

(2) The plant material resides in a place of origin where high-risk taro pests and diseases do not occur;

(3) The plant material is disease indexed and tissue cultured to create certified clean material prior to re-entry; and

(4) The plant material is described in CTAHR "Bulletin 84: Taro Varieties in Hawaii" (1939)

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and provide comments on Senate Bill 3038, SD2.





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March 13, 2020

HEARING BEFORE THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

**TESTIMONY ON SB 3038, SD2**  
RELATING TO TARO

Room 312  
8:30 AM

Aloha Chair Creagan, Vice Chair DeCoite, and Members of the Committee:

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawaii Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide and serves as Hawaii's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate and advance the social, economic and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

**The Hawaii Farm Bureau supports SB 3038, SD2**, which excludes up to \$100,000 of income derived from taro production from the state income tax.

The Hawaii Farm Bureau recognizes taro's importance in Hawaii's cultural identity and role in local food security. This measure is aimed to assist taro farmers in their efforts to increase their production and viability. We support this effort to improve the taro farmer's ability to not only sustain themselves but also to expand their long term success.

HFB supports any initiative that reduces the cost of production so that locally produced goods can compete with imported products, strengthening our local economy.

Hawaii Farm Bureau Policy states:

"State tax and monetary policies should be designed to encourage private initiative to help stabilize farm economics in the State of Hawaii, to promote employment and economic growth and to distribute the tax burden equitably. Further such policy should be used by the state, when appropriate, to encourage agricultural growth and expansion."

HFB supports SB 3038, SD2 which is an investment in Hawaii's taro farmers.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on this important subject.



HO'O ULU AINA  
FARMS

**LATE**

FRIDAY, MARCH 13, 2020, 8:30AM

STATE OF HAWAI'I  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 3038 SD2  
RELATING TO TARO

Dear Chair Creagon, Vice-Chair DeCoite, and Committee Members,

Ho'oulu 'Aina Farms **strongly supports** SB3038 SD2 relating to taro. As an island state Hawaii is on the front lines of this climate crisis. We face a unique set of issues relating to its high biodiversity, isolation, and exposure to external economic shocks.

To enhance the effectiveness of this bill to promote taro farmers and poi production Ho'oulu 'Aina Farms suggests a non substantive addition to the proposed bill to clarify the use of land considered for exemption under this new statute. Please consider the additions below:

SECTION 2. [...]

(13) Any income up to \$100,000 derived from the direct sale of taro products, ~~land used~~ **the use of land** for taro farming, or any activity directly related to taro farming; provided that this paragraph shall not apply if at any time during the year the total amount of land for locally grown taro in the State surpasses thirty thousand acres, as determined by the department of land and natural resources."

SECTION 3. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, ~~2050~~2020, and shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2019.

Throughout Hawai'i, traditional agriculture, and specifically lo'i kalo historically played an important role within the traditional ahupua'a system. Lo'i provided a host of ecosystem services to native plants and animals while at the same time supporting a large human population, contributing to a vibrant and resilient community.

Lo'i Kalo is a unique and viable solution to climate change. The broad scale use of lo'i kalo provides a variety of mitigation strategies by 1) removing entrained sediments from the stream and provide the needed retention times that allow fine-grained sediment to settle out of suspension 2) decentralizes storm-water management, treating water close to its source, at key points throughout the landscape instead of relying solely upon a few large dams or basins 3) absorbing nitrogen and phosphorous, nutrients essential for the growth of kalo, but harmful to coral reefs 4) providing additional storage areas and flow paths for large volumes of water,



**HO'O ULU AINA  
FARMS**

spreading out the force of flood waters and preventing damage 5) increasing the flood-plane and opportunities for infiltration and aquifer recharge.

This bill will be extremely helpful in promoting food security in Hawaii and increase the capacity for taro farmers to reinvest their minimal profits back into their farms. This ensures the protection of Hawaii's state plant and provides a triple benefit for addressing changing climatic conditions.

Mahalo for this opportunity to provide testimony for this bill and the promotion of the kalo and poi industries

Neal Hoapili Ane  
Owner Operator  
Ho'oulu 'Aina Farms



# Environmental Caucus of The Democratic Party of Hawai'i

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Friday, March 13, 2020

Senate Bill 3038 SD2, Relating to Kalo  
Testifying in Support

Me ke Aloha, Chair Creagan, Vice-Chair DeCoite, and members of the Agriculture Committee

The Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party **supports passage of SB3038 SD2, Relating to Kalo.** This bill is part of the initiative to embrace Aloha 'Aina through a Green New Deal for Hawaii working families, It is altogether fitting that your committees hear this important bill to build resilience of Hawaii agriculture, fortifying and regenerating soil capacity to produce more nutritious food and greater self-reliance on local agriculture.

Many in Hawaii find it difficult to comprehend the nature of accelerating change. Every report announces new feedback loops already kicking in to accelerate climate change beyond our control. Every report from climate scientists raises additional alarm about the imperative need to stave off catastrophic change while we can. As change accumulates and disasters mount, they will no longer appear isolated, and not always somewhere else. Hawaii recently experienced a run of an unprecedented seven hurricanes throttling in to the islands. As the new hurricane season approaches, we can only hope that this time around we do not have so many scares, or that this time it will not finally claim food-producing regions of the State or the south shore of O'ahu that connects relief to the rest of our family of islands.

Food self-reliance is an ancient story across Moana Nui, where kalo has been the staple for a formidable voyaging and farming culture. In these times when Hawaii is so drastically dependent upon importing food stuffs, it is important to remember where we came from and how we have survived this far. Kalo agriculture has been burdened by several difficulties in producing sufficient food for a market dominated by global tastes, but the capacity to feed ourselves in times of emergency must be encouraged by every possible means. This bill is an important step in assuring that kalo farmers can succeed where we need them to.

It will become increasingly essential for Hawaii to prepare for disruptions to our far-flung imported food supply. This bill represents 21<sup>st</sup> Century infrastructural support that Hawaii will be proud to herald as our legacy of forward thinking. The small loss in revenues that will support the potential expansion of kalo agriculture are far outweighed by the losses sure to follow if we fail to act.

As an element of the initiative to assure a stable and productive environment for all Hawaii working families, the Environmental Caucus Green New Deal Working Group strongly urges prompt passage of this bill.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify,

/s/

Charley Ice, Green New Deal Working Group, Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i



Pono Hawai'i Initiative

Josh Frost - President • Patrick Shea - Treasurer • Kristin Hamada  
Nelson Ho • Summer Starr

Friday, March 13, 2020

Relating to Taro  
Testifying in Support

Aloha Chair and members of the committee,

The Pono Hawai'i Initiative (PHI) **supports SB3038, SD2 Relating to Taro**, which exempts taro production from the State income Tax.

This measure helps to incentivize farmers to grow taro, one of the best staple starch foods available. By encouraging more people to grow and produce taro we can help increase local food production and help Hawai'i reach its food sustainability goals. Encouraging taro farming will also help to keep native Hawaiian traditions alive.

For all these reasons, we urge you to move this bill forward.

Mahalo for the opportunity,  
Gary Hooser  
Executive Director  
Pono Hawai'i Initiative



Board of Directors:

**House Committee on Agriculture**

Gary L. Hooser  
*President*

Friday, March 13, 2020, 8:30 a.m., Conference Room 312

Andrea N. Brower  
Ikaika M. Hussey  
*Co-Vice Presidents*

**Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action strongly supports: SB 3038**

Kim Coco Iwamoto  
*Treasurer*

Aloha Chair Creagan, Vice Chair DeCoite and Members of the Committee,

Bart E. Dame  
*Secretary*

I am submitting testimony on behalf of the Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) in strong support of SB 3038 which would create economic incentives for kalo farmers and could reduce the cost of poi for local families by exempting kalo production from state income taxes. In so doing, this measure could help make kalo more widely accessible and enable Hawaiian families to reconnect with this culturally important food.

Paul Achitoff

Laura Harrelson

Kalo farmers are facing increasing challenges related to climate change impacts, such as the April 2018 flooding that decimated Hanalei taro crops on the north shore of Kauai. If we are serious about meeting our local food security goals it is important to provide this kind of economic incentive which will make it viable for kalo farmers to make a living despite the increasing challenges due to climate change and cost of living in Hawaii.

Kaleikoa Ka'eo

Michael Miranda

Walter Ritte Jr.

Pua Rossi-Fukino

Please support SB 3038.

Karen Shishido

Respectfully,

Leslie Malulani Shizue Miki

Anne Frederick,  
Executive Director



**LATE**

FRIDAY, MARCH 13, 2020, 8:30AM

STATE OF HAWAII  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 3038 SD2  
RELATING TO TARO

Dear Chair Creagon, Vice-Chair DeCoite, and Committee Members,

The Living Pono Project **strongly supports** SB3038 SD2 relating to taro. LPP's mission is to revitalize our Hawaiian culture through education, outreach, and environmental restoration. We provide educational resources to k-12 students with an emphasis on perpetuating the Hawaiian culture. We also provide work related postsecondary education and employment opportunities for adults with disabilities. The LPP is inspired and guided by many core Hawaiian values, especially the Aloha spirit and being Pono. The founders of LPP believe that as the people of Hawaii we have a responsibility to take care of our people and the aina so that future generations of Native Hawaiians and islanders can thrive.

This bill promotes the governors mandate to double food production by 2030, will increase food security in Hawaii, and build the capacity for taro farmers to reinvest their minimal profits back into their farms. The number of taro farms and total acreage statewide, as well as the sale of taro and poi, generates only a small amount of tax revenue for the state; this tax exemption would have negligible impacts on state revenues and incentives for young taro farmers.

Furthermore, this bill ensures the protection of Hawaii's state plant and provides a triple benefit for promoting cultural values, building a circular economy, being food resilient, and addressing climate change.

- Taro should be recognized as the next "Super Food". Taro is hypoallergenic, high in antioxidant and potassium, vitamins A & C and folate, which helps to reduce high cholesterol levels, promotes fetal development, maintains a bodies pH balance, promotes eye health
- Most taro farmers earn far less than the low income or poverty line rates established by the state.
- The cost of poi (avg. \$7-10 per pound retail; as high as \$13 per pound) remains inaccessible to families most in need of this important staple starch food; a tax exemption for poi mills could help reduce the high cost of poi for such families.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify in support of SB3038 SD2

Mercer Vicens  
President, BOD  
Living Pono Project

**SB-3038-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/11/2020 10:14:22 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/13/2020 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Leimomi Khan	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Continue to support.

Comments:

Testifier Position

Present at Hearing



Leimomi Khan Individual Support No



Fully support. This measure is a natural progression to implement some of the recommendations made in a Taro report required by the legislature several years ago. I appreciate this measure primarily because I am hopeful that with some tax relief, more taro will be produced, more poi will be made available, and perhaps taro, including poi, will be less expensive. As with all other local people who have been brought up with poi, we have been burdened by the increasing costs of poi, unlike the costs of other staples of potato and rice. Poi is also a healthy food.

As OHA Trustee, Carmen Hulu Lindsey notes, "kalo cultivation remains one of Native Hawaiians' most important cultural practices. Although at one time Maoli farmers tended more than 20,000 acres of kalo, only 500 are in cultivation, which represents less than one percent of Hawai'i's active agricultural lands. Caring for the kalo brings Kanaka Maoli back into balance with the 'Ā,ina, tempers our use of resources and turns our relationship to one of reciprocity and stewardship. The cycle of preparing the lo'i, planting, growing, harvesting, preparing the food and eating is also the cycle of creation.



Investing resources in kalo production ensures that the state provides much needed relief for our farmers, encourages increased participation in farming, allows our state to move to its goal of growing food production in light of the climate crisis, and recognizes our Kanaka Maoli practices of kalo cultivation."

Please support SB3038 SD2.

**SB-3038-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/11/2020 11:29:22 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/13/2020 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Hunter Heavilin	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha members of the Agriculture Committee;

Thank you for scheduling SB3038 Relating to Taro. As a taro grower and former member of the Taro Task Force, I appreciate the support the bill has received from legislators, agencies and many organizations, taro farmers statewide, and our counties, as well as input from the Department of Taxation.

The intention of SB3038 is to provide economic relief and incentives to taro farmers and poi millers as part of efforts to double food production in Hawaii by 2030 and improve access to healthy foods for our communities. Regarding taro farming lands, the current wording may be misinterpreted. As written, the exemption appears to benefit those who might sell taro farming lands which would be counter-productive to the intentions of the bill. I would like to recommend a simple change in the proposed language to remedy this so that the sentence focus is on "use" of land versus "sale" of land, as follows:

(13) Any income up to \$100,000 derived from the direct sale of taro products, ~~land used~~ **the use of land** for taro farming, or any activity directly related to taro farming; provided that this paragraph shall not apply if at any time during the year the total amount of land for locally grown taro in the State surpasses thirty thousand acres, as determined by the department of land and natural resources."

Please also restore the effective date to July 1, 2020.

SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, ~~2020~~**2020**, and shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2019.

We appreciate your support and look forward to SB3038's passage in AGR!  
Mahalo,

Penny Levin  
Taro farmer

**SB-3038-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/12/2020 6:49:15 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/13/2020 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Max Pono Castanera	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

**SB-3038-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/12/2020 10:01:40 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/13/2020 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Shannon Rudolph	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Support!

**SB-3038-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/12/2020 11:39:35 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/13/2020 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Wendy Arbeit	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

We should do everything possible to support our taro farmers and lower the need to import food. Exempting taro farmers from taxes also will make it more possible for our keiki to enjoy it in school lunches.

**SB-3038-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/12/2020 2:25:09 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/13/2020 8:30:00 AM

**LATE**

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Tara Rojas	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Support ancestral Native Hawaiian food - the Native Hawaiian diet was/is the healthiest diet.

**LATE**

**SB-3038-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/12/2020 2:41:45 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/13/2020 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Mary Lacques	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support SB3038, SD2 because this bill will incentivize farmers to grow taro which in turn increases local food production, but more importantly it preserves the cultural tradition of taro farming in Hawai'i.

I support this bill with the following recommended changes in the language:

"Any income up to \$100,000 derived from the direct sale of taro products, land used the use of land for taro farming, or any activity directly related to taro farming; provided that this paragraph shall not apply if at any time during the year the total amount of land for locally grown taro in the State surpasses thirty thousand acres, as determined by the department of land and natural resources."

SECTION 3. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2020, and shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2019.

·"Taro products" is inclusive of corm, leaf, huli. poi, flour, kulolo, etc which supports new entrepreneurs and markets for taro growers beyond the traditional taro, luau leaf, and poi markets.



**LATE**

**SB-3038-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/12/2020 2:54:16 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/13/2020 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Chana Ane	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Mahalo for this opportunity to provide testimony in **strongly support** of SB3038 SD2 and the Committee on Agriculture and Environment Standing Committee Report No. 2625 findings "that it is of critical importance to protect and perpetuate the traditional practice of taro farming as part of Hawaii's cultural identity and its role in local food security. Loi kalo, or wetland taro systems, are recognized for their potential to mitigate impacts of climate change by functioning as riparian buffers and soil capture basins. Also, underground foods, such as taro, can often survive hurricane or flood events and be harvested to address immediate food shortages where the capacity to store and cook food can be retained."

The passing of this bill will promote Hawaii's economy by alleviating tax burdens on farmers that carry on the traditions of kalo cultivation and stimulate the economy by promoting value added taro products. Lo'i kalo also provides a host of ecosystem services to native plants and animals while at the same time supporting a large human population, contributing to a vibrant and resilient community.

Please consider the following clarifications:

SECTION 2. [...]

(13) Any income up to \$100,000 derived from the direct sale of taro and taro products, ~~land used~~ the use of land for taro farming, or any activity directly related to taro farming; provided that this paragraph shall not apply if at any time during the year the total amount of land for locally grown taro in the State surpasses thirty thousand acres, as determined by the department of land and natural resources."

SECTION 3. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, ~~2050~~2020, and shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2019.

I would also like to offer comments on the protection of the kalo industry by including the biosecurity protection in future legislation to prevent the ever-increasing risk of new

diseases and pests and invasive taro cultivars from importing certain raw taro products that could pose a threat to the fragile, yet critically important commercial taro industry and subsistence taro production in Hawaii.

In 1981, the Hawaii State Department of Agriculture established the first biosecurity protocol prohibiting the international import of Kalo in respect to the disease alomae and babone from the Soloman Islands HAR 4-70-51, 52, 53, 54 in 1981, HRS 141-2, 150A. Since then these departmental rules have not been updated in response to the change in the geographic distribution of these pathogens or research on additional biosecurity threats to the Kalo industry. The State of Hawaii has the fewest biosecurity protocols for our most culturally important crop. In contrast, there are stringent regulations in places across the pacific to protect the biosecurity and economy of nations such as Fiji, Cook Island, New Zealand, and Australia from known pests and pathogens associated with kalo cultivation and transportation including taro planthopper (*Tarophagus proserpina*), taro leaf blight (*Phytophthora colocasiae*), colocasia bobone disease virus (CBDV), the French Polynesian strain of Dasheen mosaic virus, Taro vein chlorosis virus (TaVVCV) and tomato zonate spot virus (TZSV).

Under the Plant Protection Act (7 U.S.C. 7701 et seq.), states are expressly prevented from regulating foreign commerce to control, eradicate, or prevent the introduction or dissemination of plant pests or noxious weeds (7 U.S.C. 7756 (a)) . The Plant Protection Act also preempts states from regulating domestic commerce if the federal government has already issued such a regulation for those purposes, unless the regulation is consistent with but does not exceed the federal regulation (7 U.S.C. 7756(b)). In this instance, the federal government has not already issued such a regulation; therefore, it is within the State's purview to set standards.

Action is needed to improve the State's programs to effectively implement the Hawai'i interagency biosecurity plan and exercise state authority to protect this valuable indigenous solution to climate change from biological threats such as Fiji ginger weevil, Taro Beetles, Taro Planthopper, Paraputo mealybugs, Yam Scale, Taro Root Aphid , Spiral, Nematodes, Taro Rood Nematode, Needle Nematode, Bacterial Blight of Taro, Corm Rot: *Ceratocystis fimbriata* and *paradoxa* (not *huliohia* or *lukuohia* but the same genus), *Carallomyces* Root Rot, Black Root Rot, Taro Leaf Flight, Taro Pocket Rot, *Pythium* Corm Rot, *Colocasia* Bobone Disease, Dasheen Mosaic, Taro Reovirus, Taro Vein Chlorosis, Tamatoe Zonate Spot

I strongly support protecting Hawaii's most cultural important food crop by banning the importation of taro corms unless dried, cooked, frozen, or peeled and banning the importation of live taro plant material from any point of origin in the United States. The addition of biosecurity protections in future legislation would:

- promote indigenous solutions to climate change by recognizing the mitigation potential Lo'i kalo provides
- benefit the local economy by reducing our reliance on imports and keeping money circulating in the local economy.

- support further taro biosecurity regulation at the federal level by demonstrating that the State is taking action where we have the authority
- improve food security for Hawaii's remote population by preserving and expanding production of locally grown taro
- preserve and expand critical riparian wildlife habitat that overlaps significantly with areas where taro is cultivated
- provide biosecurity for local growers by reducing exposure to a wide variety of invasive pests and diseases
- increase climate resilience around the Islands by preserving and expanding the ecosystem services that result from locally grown taro

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in **support** of this bill!

**LATE**

**SB-3038-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/12/2020 4:22:47 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/13/2020 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Olan Leimomi Fisher	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

**LATE**

**SB-3038-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/12/2020 9:40:19 PM  
Testimony for AGR on 3/13/2020 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Naomi Melamed	Individual	Support	No

Comments: